



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEDIA ADVISORY

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

PRUITT OFFERED EDUCATION COMMISSIONER POST

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Today the Kentucky Board of Education voted to extend an offer of employment to Stephen L. Pruitt to become Kentucky's sixth commissioner of education. Pruitt is currently senior vice president at Achieve, Inc., an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C.

The Kentucky Board of Education took the action to hire Pruitt at a special-called meeting in Frankfort. Chairman Roger Marcum said the board has done its due diligence and the board is unanimous in its decision that Pruitt is the right person for the job.

"We are extremely proud to have someone of Dr. Pruitt's caliber to consider for the position," Marcum said. "We feel like this is a great decision for public education in Kentucky – for our educators and students alike."

In discussing their impressions of Pruitt, board members cited his outstanding communication skills, academic experience, in-depth understanding of education issues, emphasis on collaboration, ability to build relationships, proven track record of building coalitions and partnerships, approachability and his enthusiasm – especially for Kentucky and the future of Kentucky.

"I am honored and excited that the board is extending an offer of employment for me to be the next Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth of Kentucky," Pruitt said in a statement read by Marcum. "I thank the Kentucky Board of Education for its support and confidence. I am looking forward to attending the October 6 board meeting to finalize my selection and begin making plans for starting work by mid-October. As a classroom teacher, a state administrator, and vice president for an education non-profit, my focus has always been on doing what is best for students and that will not change as Commissioner. I anticipate collaborating immediately with our state and community leaders to empower educators and parents, and provide every Kentucky student with an education that prepares them for success in the 21st century."

Dr. Pruitt's prior experience includes chief of staff, associate state superintendent, director of academic standards, and science and mathematics program manager with the Georgia Department of Education; and high school chemistry teacher in Fayetteville and Tyrone, Georgia.

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He earned a bachelor's degree from North Georgia College and State University, a master's from the University of West Georgia and a Doctorate of Philosophy from Auburn University.

Pruitt is 47. He and his wife have two children. Their son is in college at the University of Colorado-Boulder and their daughter is a high school junior and will be attending a Kentucky public school.

The board plans to ratify the new commissioner's contract at its October 6 meeting. Pruitt is expected to start work October 16.

"Dr. Pruitt told the board that he sees this position as the capstone of his career, and that he intends to be here a long, long time as our commissioner," Marcum said.

During the search for a new commissioner, the board and Greenwood/Asher and Associates, Inc. made more than 330 contacts, reviewed detailed information on approximately 44 individuals and interviewed 13 candidates.

Pruitt replaces Terry Holliday, who retired as education commissioner last month.

Associate Commissioner and General Counsel Kevin C. Brown is serving as interim commissioner until Pruitt officially begins his duties.

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